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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/13/2012
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SUBJECT: PALESTINIAN NY REP URGES USG SUPPORT FOR UNSC
ACTION ON SETTLEMENTS

REF: USUN 519

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Palestinian Amb Riyadh Mansour met at his request June 13 with Council President Amb Khalilzad to express Palestinian support for a Saudi draft of an UNSC resolution calling on Israel to freeze settlement activity. Mansour argued that there is an international consensus on the substance of the draft resolution, recalling that the Roadmap, Annapolis, and the Quartet all oppose new settlements. He insisted that this is not a polemical exercise, but a sincere effort to salvage the peace process. He expressed the view that if the USG supported the draft UNSCR during the month of June, when the United States holds the Presidency of the Security Council, Israel will not perceive the adoption as a hostile act.

¶2. (C) Amb Khalilzad raised four immediate concerns about the proposal. First, he noted that the initiative is one-sided, as it does not address Palestinian obligations under the Roadmap. Second, he raised the issue of timing, noting Secretary Rice is scheduled to travel to the region June 14 to support direct Israeli-Palestinian talks. Third, he recalled well-justified and longstanding Israeli sensitivity about any Security Council action on the Arab-Israeli issue. Fourth, he questioned the impact of such an effort on the Annapolis process.

¶3. (C) Mansour argued that the PA leadership, President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad, have stated that the Annapolis process is at a deadlock and identified continuing settlement activity as the key obstacle. Although Mansour initially attempted to argue that Israeli violations of the Roadmap are more significant because they "are changing reality," he subsequently agreed that a resolution calling on both sides to live up to their obligations would be acceptable. He insisted, however, that the Palestinian Authority is fully engaged in the process of implementing its obligations on security. When Amb Khalilzad raised the continuing rocket attacks on southern Israel from the Gaza strip, Mansour retorted that the PA had no authority there. On timing, he said the Arab Group would be flexible "in exchange for something concrete" in the Security Council on settlements. Mansour allowed that Israeli domestic politics are difficult, but emphasized that continuing settlement activity endangered the peace process. He suggested that a statement by the Security Council may be easier for the USG to support than a unilateral U.S. statement critical of settlement activity. He also said he had raised the UNSCR with Israeli PermRep Daniel Gillerman, although Mansour did not say how Gillerman had responded.

¶4. (C) Amb Khalilzad made it clear that he had no more specific response than the four points he had made and said he would report this conversation. Mansour said the Arab Group had appointed a delegation comprised of Mauritania, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Libya and the Palestinian mission to

consult with Security Council delegations about the draft UNSCR. Amb Khalilzad agreed to Mansour's request to meet with the delegation next week in his capacity as Security Council President. The two agreed to say they were consulting on the matter.

Khalilzad